

Cheryl Wills is named Fire & Rescue's August Team Member of the Month

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue announced that Community Risk Reductions Specialist Cheryl Wills is the Team Member of the Month

The department honors members of the team who serve the community with Passion, Professionalism and Pride.

Wills grew up in Fountain Valley where her father worked in construction, specializing in HVAC systems. Her mother was a K – 4th grade teacher, and she has two older sisters.

After graduating from Mater Dei High School where she was a stand out cheerleader who competed on a national level, Wills attended Orange Coast College and Santa Ana College, where she completed several fire science classes. In 1992 she graduated from Rio Hondo's Fire Academy and was hire by Monterey Park Fire Department in 1994 where she was the first paid female firefighter in the San Gabriel Valley.

After four years as a firefighter, Wills' mom was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. With her mom's diagnosis and wanting to start a family of her own, she struggled with balancing family demands and her work schedule (firefighters work 24 hours shifts). It was at this time she decided to pursue a different career path within the fire service so she could spend time with her mom and start her own family.

Wills transferred to Fire Prevention (Community Risk Reduction) with Monterey Park Fire Department. In 2002, she was hired with Costa Mesa Fire Department (Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue) as a Fire Protection Specialist – Public Education, now an Inspector.

Notable achievements during her tenure with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue include, but are not limited to: teaching the first Citizens Fire Academy in 2003, Overachiever Fire Civilian of the Year – 2004, Excellence in Work Performance Award – 2009, and Key Note Speaker at Ferragamo Breast Cancer where she received a standing ovation!; She also assists with our annual toy drives for less fortunate kids and is a member of Women Leading Government.

Wills is married to her husband Steve, who is a K-9 officer with Los Angeles Police Department and a Navy Veteran. They have two children Brock and Nicole.

Costa Mesa Fire Prevention Specialist visits China

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue's Fire Prevention Specialist Brenda Emrick recently returned from a week long trip to China.

The recent trip included eight days of instructor development to provide U.S. representatives the expertise needed to observe and support previously trained CERT China instructors in delivering a basic CERT course to a Beijing audience

Preparation continues for

fire season

Firefighters continue to prepare for what is predicted to be an active fire season.

As part of their training, firefighters are performing progressive hose lays (used when we have to travel long distances, sometimes over 1000') and exercising their communications plan.

Additionally, each firefighter is required to deploy their fire shelter, which is a last resort if they find themselves in a burn over situation.

Fire academy recruits train for live fire techniques

Costa Mesa Fire and Rescue recruits continue to progress in their academy training. Recently, the academy cadre was led by Captain Joe Noceti and the recruits trained with live fire. Recruits learned about fire behavior, fire attack principles and the dangers of attacking a fire.

Some of the recruits had eyes as wide as saucers as this was their first time attacking a fire in a controlled environment.

Fire and Rescue teams to take part in the Emergency Operations Exercise at John Wayne Airport

On Friday, April 14, John Wayne Airport will be conducting a Triennial Emergency Operations Exercise from the hours of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. This full-scale exercise is mandated by the FAA and is designed to evaluate the operational capability of the emergency management system in a stressful environment.

The [Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Department](#) will be an active participant with a number of other agencies in this drill since we share a border with the John Wayne Airport and routinely respond to emergencies on the airport campus.

The public should be aware that Airway Avenue will be shut down from Baker to Paularino from approximately 8 a.m. to 12 noon to accommodate the exercise. Also, the CMPD Helipad will be used during the exercise.

This is an excellent readiness exercise for the airport and CMF&R is a proud participant. It will increase interagency operations and communication between all the public and private resources. Most importantly it will enhance the safety and security for the tenants and passengers using the airport.

Fire & Rescue team pushes ahead with new fire engines in time-honored fashion

The Fire & Rescue team has announced the arrival of two new fire engines as part of an upgrade to the department's fleet.

The public will get a chance to see the new engines, which will be on display Tuesday March 7 in front of City Council Chambers during the City Council meeting.

When the engines first arrived, members of the department honored an old tradition of physically pushing the engine into the station.

In addition, the department said a prayer with Police/Fire Chaplain Mike Decker.



"Early hand drawn fire engines, ladder wagons, hose carts, were physically pushed back into the station by hand after calls for service," Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. "The horse

drawn steam engines that followed could be backed up by the engineers, but it was difficult to align the steam connections on the engine with those in the station, so the horses were disconnected and the steamers were also often pushed back into the station by hand.”

While not every department continues in the tradition, Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue team has preserved that fire history.

“Ultimately, we evolved when our engines had motorized horsepower,” Stefano said. “But the fire service lives and breathes in tradition, and in an effort to honor and pay tribute our past, the new engine barn push in is executed by some.”

City urges residents to brace for yet another winter squall expected to hit Costa Mesa

City staff is urging residents to prep for a fierce winter storm that is expected to bring high winds and drench Costa Mesa and surrounding communities with as a much as two inches of rain.

To help with potential flooding, the city is providing sandbags to **residents only and not for commercial use**. Also, sandbags are limited to **15 per resident**.

The city offers a pre-filled sandbag station at the Southeast corner of the City Hall parking lot at at 77 Fair Drive while supplies last. There are signs on Fair Drive that will direct residents to the location.

Residents can also fill up sandbags at Fire Station No. 4 located at 2300 Placentia Ave. Bags and sand will be available for free, but please bring ID to show to City staff before picking up the bags.

Click [here for information on how to prepare](#) sand bags.

Further, the city has added additional maintenance crews for Friday and Saturday to assist with emergencies.

Residents are urged to drive safely, watch for downed trees and power lines and be prepared for potential flooding. Residents who are in need of assistance are encouraged to call the city's non-emergency line at 714-754-5252.

As always, in the case of emergencies, downed power lines or other life threatening issues, please dial 9-1-1.

In anticipation of the storm, County officials have issued a Flash Flood Watch and High Wind Watch for both Coastal and Inland Orange County. Please click on the links below for further information on these alerts:

[High Wind Watch in effect from February 17, 07:00 AM PST until February 18, 07:00 AM PST](#)

[Flash Flood Watch in effect from February 17, 12:00 PM PST until February 18, 04:00 PM PST](#)

Click [here to see how to contact Southern California Edison](#) or call 1-800-611-1911 to report power outages.

The agency "211 OC" is also poised to help coordinate assistance. 211 OC has an around the clock phone line to help with all types of emergencies and provides regional connection to resources for disasters victims, the homeless, and others needing health and human services.

Information about 211 OC can be found at www.211OC.org or by simply calling 2-1-1.

Firefighters put lifesaving skills to work on return flight from fire engine inspection

Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue Division Chief Jason Pyle was settled into his plane seat high over the skies of Colorado and enjoying a movie with his headphones on when he heard what sounded like a call for medical assistance.

Pyle, Fire Engineer Steve Cathey and fleet maintenance supervisor Gant Corum were just returning from Appleton Wisconsin where they were doing the final inspections on two new fire engines.

He pulled off his headphones and again heard the flight attendant put out a call for medical emergency and asked that anyone with medical training come back to assist.

Pyle peered to the back of airplane and knew his services were needed.

“There’s a guy all balled up on the floor, and he was in respiratory distress,” he said as he quickly walked back toward the plane to assist the senior-aged man. “He was blue, and he didn’t look like he was breathing.”

Pyle and the flight attendants slid him over to a portion of the plane where they could work on him. He was later joined by a nurse, a cardiologist and Cathey who helped with the medical charting and got the man’s medical history from his daughter.

As they performed patient care and began treatment on him the

man was initially unconscious but as they provided the first aid his condition stabilized.

Meanwhile, the team of responders were able to contact the plane's captain and advised him the flight needed to be diverted to Denver.

"That was like a roller coaster ride," Pyle said as the plane quickly descended to the Mile High City.

Once the landed, he and Cathey met Denver Fire at the door to provide them with the information about the man, who they learned was 90 years old. By that time, he was talking and conscious and his color came back.

"The most important thing was getting him into a stable condition and providing him appropriate medical care," Pyle said. "We got him in that window where he was in a savable moment."

Pyle gives lots of credit to the flight crew for saving the man's life.

"They are the ones who raised the concern and they are the ones who found him," he said. "Their fast action to look for help and alert others and their ability to recognize an emergency was key."

The other thing that assisted was the man's daughter was able to provide his medical history to Pyle and others helping him.

That helped provide a jump start on his medical care and Pyle recommends that residents carry a medical bracelet or necklace that identifies medical conditions in case they are ever in need.

And if saving a life wasn't enough, two family friends who were traveling with the man, stayed on the plane but didn't have a ride home. So Steve Cathey gave them a ride home to Los Alamitos. And those friends have since kept him up date on the

man's condition.

"They sent me a couple letters saying that he is doing good," Cathey said.

For Pyle and Cathey, it was good knowing their training came in handy that day.

"It's part of what we do," Cathey said.

Pyle agreed.

"It's good to know when you have ability to help, that you are able to help," Pyle said. "It doesn't matter if you are in the streets of Costa Mesa or flying over Colorado."

Members of the Community get CERT Training

The Fire & Rescue staff has happily reported that 16 community members recently graduated from the CERT training hosted by Greenleaf Mobile Home Park.

Participants learned skills in preparedness, fire safety and utility control, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue techniques, homeland security awareness and disaster emotional first aid.

Members of the instructional team included Fire Capt. Fred McDowell and Costa Mesa Police Lt. Vic Bakkila as well as volunteer instructors, Georgette Quinn, Cindy Brenneman, Dee Chester and program manager Brenda Emrick.

The next CERT class will be offered in March.

City Manager Hatch provides update to Mesa Verde Community Inc.

On Tuesday Jan. 18, City Manager Tom Hatch gave a presentation to the Mesa Verde Community Inc. to update the group on several city initiatives.

Hatch brought them up to speed on the Fire Station No. 1 replacement efforts and noted that the groundbreaking for the new station will take place on March 11, 2017 with completion scheduled for the following spring of 2018.

He also told the group what was going on with the Lions Park improvements which includes a new library and community center. Hatch also gave updates on the new City Council, the Mesa Verde medians, city staffing, the homeless and the news that the Chargers are moving the team headquarters here.

City offers resources to deal with fallen trees, downed

power lines, flooding and more

A powerful winter storm that whipped through Costa Mesa on Friday knocked down at least two large trees and one tree took out some power lines.

Crews from Southern California Edison responded and assisted with the power lines.

There were more than 30 calls for service related to issues with smaller trees and two metal plates in the road near Sunflower and Main fell into the hole they were covering as part of some road construction work, forcing the city to close two lanes of traffic.

Who to call?

With another storm coming possibly on Sunday and Monday, residents in need of assistance are encouraged to call the city's non-emergency line at 714-754-5252.

As always, in the case of emergencies, downed power lines or other life threatening issues, please dial 9-1-1.

Click [here to see how to contact Southern California Edison](#) or call 1-800-611-1911 to report power outages.

Sandbags available

Residents are also encouraged to obtain sandbags to deal with potential or real flooding problems.

The city offers a self serve process at the Southeast corner of the parking lot at City Hall located at 77 Fair Drive where residents can get up to 15 sandbags.

There are signs on Fair Drive that will direct you to the

location.

Please visit City Hall as our primary location for sandbags, or if we are out of sand, you can obtain sandbags at Fire Station No. 4 located at 2300 Placentia Ave.

Click [here for information on how to prepare sand bags.](#)

211 OC

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Mayor Foley and Council Member Stephens deliver new coats to Boys and Girls Club

Mayor Katrina Foley, Council Member John Stephens and members of the police and fire departments paid a visit to the Westside Boys and Girls Club on Wednesday to deliver 100 donated new coats to the children there.

This is Mayor Foley’s eighth year of holding a coat drive for the city’s low-income community. In addition to the new coats, about about 50 gently used coats and sweatshirts were donated as well as \$1,884 raised for the Fire Association charity drive and approximately 40 toys for the OCBA Spark of Love Toy

Drive.

Foley and Stephens took questions from the kids in the after school program as did members of police and fire. Emergency coordinator Brenda Emrick urged the children to take a safety pledge and take proper precautions during the holiday season.